

Forfatter: Grundtvig, N. F. S.

Titel: Udrag fra History of the Northmen, or Danes and Normans, from the Earliest Times to the Conquest of England by William of Normandy

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Yet it is most true, as Mr. Wheaton says in his preface, that the written monuments of the North “throw a strong and clear light upon the affairs of Europe during the middle ages, and illustrate the formation of the great monarchies now constituting some of its leading states;” and strange would it be, if such records, while they instruct and guide the inquirer who follows a brave and hardy people in their migrations and settlements in other lands—should not, at the same time, have a charm when they tell the domestic story of those who remained at home. If energy of thought and will distinguished those who went forth to encounter the perils of the stormy deep—scarcely less are the same qualities discernible in those who lingered in their native abodes. Mr. Wheaton's eye of observation is occupied with the whole field; and in every part of it he has done for our instruction, far more than any English writer that has preceded him. May he find all encouragement to proceed with his labours! It will be most gratifying to find that the topic so interesting in itself, is felt generally to be interesting; but it is easier to nourish a curiosity that does exist, than to call that curiosity into existence. On England the subject has a very especial claim—for in England, these men, whom the father of northern history calls “the Kingly Scyldings,” not only pitched their camps, but raised their castles, and built their palaces—not only looked in as visitors, but fixed themselves as inhabitants;—where they introduced a new language, literature, and social existence, creating one of the great epochs in the history of the human race. To claim thus much for the Northern men, may seem presumption. Let those who would gainsay the statement, assist the inquiry; there is much to be done; the subject has the freshness, the bloom of novelty upon it; and if able pens will give it the literary charm, no doubt an interest will be awakened, whose long long slumbers it is not very easy to excuse or to explain.